

Begin Again

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Summary: The Sith Temple de-aged Ahsoka to three years old. Rather than kill her, Vader decided to make her his new Apprentice.

1. Chapter 1

The crackling energy of the Sith Temple swept over Vader like the first gust of wind before a sandstorm. It was painful, but nowhere near as painful as losing his remaining three limbs and then literally burning alive had been.

However, the energy appeared to have a much more negative effect on Ahsoka. She had collapsed, and there was something definitely wrong with her. She was smaller. Much smaller. Strange that he hadn't been affected. Maybe it only shrunk those who used the Light Side?

The tiny Togruta clumsily pushed herself to her feet and stared around in confusion. She couldn't have been more than three years old.

Finally, she saw him. Little Ahsoka looked up and up and up and her eyes met his one exposed eye.

"Anakin?" the tiny toddler chirped. "Wha' happened t' you?"

Vader silently stared at Ahsoka, drowning in her shirt that had become a dress on her much shortened frame. He didn't want to admit it, not even to himself, but Skywalker's former Padawan was adorable as a toddler.

The three-year old waddled over to him, latched onto his leg, and peered up at him with her big, blue eyes. Vader ignited his lightsaber, considering, for a moment, killing her and ridding himself of one of Skywalker's last failures.

Ahsoka meeped and ducked around him, curling up in his cloak, as if being out of sight will protect her. Her nebulous Force presence

reached out towards him, clinging to his as she sought safety and comfort.

Vader decided that it would be an even bigger insult to Skywalker's legacy if he raised Ahsoka as a Sith, make her into his own apprentice. He extinguished his lightsaber and gently untangled her from his cloak.

"Why you evil?" Ahsoka asked, hugging his leg again.

"Don't touch me," he growled as he used the Force to detach her and stalked off towards the exit. Well, it was more of a limp, but the only one who was there to see was a three-year old.

Vader could hear the patter of Ahsoka's bare feet as she tried to keep up with him. He looked back once he reached the exit, tracking her progress. If his respirator had allowed him to sigh, he would have; she was a lot slower as a toddler.

He wasn't surprised when Ahsoka tripped over the hem of her shirt and fell forward, the breastplate the only thing keeping her from smashing her face against the ground. She lay there for a few seconds, and Vader began to fear she would start crying.

"Anakin, c' you help me?" she asked, flailing her arms and legs.

He used the Force to lift her off the ground and carry her the rest of the way. It was faster than waiting for the toddler to make her way over. She shrieked and then began to giggle helplessly as she floated.

"Again, again," she demanded as soon as he set her down on the ground.

"We do not have time for this foolishness," he said rather than explain that he had been worn out from fighting her. Skywalker's Padawan had only grown more skilled since she had left the treacherous Jedi Order, and he had not expected that.

He began to walk back towards his ship again, but he went slower this time so that Ahsoka would not fall behind. She appeared to be of the same mind because she grabbed the end of his cape and held onto it as they walked to their ship.

It didn't take him long to repair the Inquisitors' ship; it had only been a droid that had disabled it, and an obsolete one at that. Ahsoka was more of a hinderance than a help in the repairs; she clearly remembered how to repair ships, but would easily get distracted by bits and pieces and play with them using the Force. It was quite annoying. Vader would have yelled at her for it, but he was too busy. His life support wouldn't hold up forever, not after the damage that the adult version of Ahsoka had done to it, and it was imperative he returned to his ship as soon as possible.

Ahsoka did not have much assistance to offer in flying the Inquisitors' ship either, being too small to reach any of the controls.

They reached his Star Destroyer in good time, meaning that his suit was still holding together. The depressurization caused by the hole

Ahsoka had cut into his mask and helmet had not been good for his lungs. He needed to spend at least twelve hours in the hyperbaric chamber before he would be in any shape to report to his Master.

That left only the problem of what to do with Ahsoka. From what he understood of children, she was too young to be left on her own for long periods of time. Maybe ordering her to go to sleep would work? No, better to get a trooper to watch over her, preferably one of the ones who were unswervingly loyal to him.

Moments after he thought of summoning a trooper, though, Ahsoka was asleep, curled up in a chair in his quarters and dead to the world. Vader used what the tattered remains of the training bond from fifteen years ago to brush over her mind with the Force, checking to see if she was actually asleep. Tomorrow, after he reported to his Master, he decided that he would work on rebuilding their bond. Then, satisfied with the current state of affairs, if not happy with them, Vader shut himself up in his hyperbaric chamber and sent himself into a healing trance.

2. Chapter 2

A/N: I have no idea where this came from. None.

Vader was pulled from his meditation by screams of pain and fear that echoed in the Force. He reached out, following the pain back to its source. Ahsoka. She was having a nightmare.

He should have expected something like this. As an adult, Ahsoka might have been able to handle the horrors of her past. The Clone Wars alone would be enough to give most beings nightmares. However, she was now three years old, and her brain would likely be struggling to deal.

The pain of her memories could be used to drive her towards the Dark Side and make her more powerful once she inevitably fell. Besides, she had left him; she deserved to hurt.

And yet, a small part of him, the part that had called out to her on Malachor, that had been relieved to learn she had survived, wanted to end her pain, to keep her from being hurt. Clearly, the best way to do that would be to erase her memories of everything before her third year.

Ahsoka had told Skywalker that one of the Jedi had found her on Shili when she was three, so it would be best if he took everything from that point onwards. She would no longer have any of the Jedi brainwashing to hold her back from touching the Dark Side.

After Vader had decided upon his course of action, there was no point in attempting to meditate again. It would just be a waste of time.

Ahsoka was still asleep when he found her, caught in the throes of a nightmare. She was curled up tightly around her pillow, traces of tears on her face. Skywalker, he was sure, would have been moved to try and comfort her, but he felt nothing.

Using the Force, he traced the tatters of their old training bond into her head, figuring that it would take a simple scan to identify the problematic memories and then erase them. Unfortunately for Vader, Ahsoka's shield had survived her transformation, and he found himself sucked into her nightmare.

They were in the room where the Jedi Council had banished her, the shadowy figures of the Council more suggestions than actual people. Ahsoka, only three years old even in her dream, cowered in the center platform. Vader was frozen in place and could only watch.

"This is your fault!" they shouted. "He fell because you left!"

"No, no I had to leave," she cried. "I had to."

"You left us to die," they accused, and suddenly their faces were visible.

Vader fought not to recoil in disgust. The Jedi Council members were all dead, their empty eyes filmed over, their flesh rotted and riddled with blaster wounds.

"It's all your fault," another voice accused, stepping out of the shadows. It was Ahsoka, but this was the Ahsoka who had fought Skywalker and Kenobi on Mortis. This Ahsoka was the Sith.

"No! I didn't do anything!" the real Ahsoka shouted, covering her montrals. A high pitched scream escaped her, and Vader flinched momentarily.

Everything froze.

Ahsoka looked up, staring straight at him.

"Anakin?" she asked. "What are you doing?"

She stood up and hopped down off of the pedestal, the dead Jedi Council fading into nothingness behind her. The Sith version of herself stepped up next to her, and then three versions joined them. The first one was fourteen years old, Skywalker's new Padawan. Another version of his Padawan was there as well, the seventeen year-old who had walked away. The final version to emerge from the shadows of her mind was the adult he had fought on Malachor.

The adult crossed her arms over her chest and stared at him. "I think we know why he's here."

The Sith smiled, her fangs glinting from some hidden light source. "He wants to get rid of you."

"No," the one who had left said. "He wants to get rid of _us_. Don't forget, you're a part of us too."

"Do you wanna fight me?" the Sith snarled.

The Padawan picked up the toddler. "We shouldn't fight, not now. There is no chaos, there is harmony, remember?"

"We aren't Jedi anymore," the one who left said. "We don't need to follow their code."

"Anakin wouldn't hurt us," the toddler chimed in. "He promised."

"Is that monster even Anakin anymore though?" the Padawan asked. "After all, once a Jedi falls, they can never return to the Light."

"He did once before," the adult pointed out. "Besides, we're going to stay even if he does remain in darkness."

"What?" Vader snarled, startled. He had no memory of Skywalker falling before his existence. They ignored him.

"But last time was artificial," the one who left argued. "That was the Son's fault."

So it had happened on Mortis. Was it the Father or Kenobi who had made him forget?

"Then whose fault was this?" the Sith asked, gesturing to him. "Obi-Wan's? The Council's? The Emperor's? Ours?"

The one who had left crumpled to the ground, clutching at her montrals. "Oh Force, this is our fault, this is all our fault," she muttered, her eyes wide and panicky.

The Sith snorted derisively.

The adult crouched down beside her younger self. "No it's not. Anakin was an adult, a Knight. It was his choice to fall."

The one who left stared up at the adult and then disappeared in a flash of light. The adult turned to the Sith, who sneered at her but also vanished. The Padawan set down the three year old and then was gone, leaving only the adult and the toddler.

"Now, what to do with you," the adult mused, staring at Vader pensively. "The way I see it, you have to options. You can either overpower me and erase me, which will leave behind someone you don't want to meet, or you can leave and accept me as I am."

"Is that a threat?" Vader asked, growing angry.

The toddler grinned. "We promised we'd stay. We're not gonna hurt you, but the Lady might. She doesn't like Dark siders."

"Her mercy is infinite," the adult broke in. "But it is cruel in itself. Leave Anakin."

Vader had a suspicion he knew who she was talking about, but that was impossible. The Daughter had died on Mortis. Unless Ahsoka's resurrection had somehow allowed the Daughter to keep a foothold in life by hiding in the subconscious of Skywalker's Padawan.

"I defeated the Daughter once, and I am stronger now," Vader pointed out.

The adult sighed. "You've spent too long festering in the Dark. Goodbye Anakin." Then she too disappeared, leaving only the toddler.

A strange beeping noise drifted through his ears, disrupting his thoughts. Ahsoka seemed to hear it too because she grinned and said "It's time to wake up."

The world faded to gray as his mind was forced back into his body.

End
file.